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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY

DECEMBER 14-15, 2002

¶11. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for December 14-15, 2002. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

¶12. ANTI-WAR RALLY ON DECEMBER 22
(Evrensel) The Adana War Opponents Platform will hold a December 22 anti-war rally in Adana, home to Incirlik Air Base, to protest U.S. preparations to attack Iraq. A number of political parties, labor unions and associations will reportedly support the rally.

¶13. VILLAGE GUARD SYSTEM WILL REMAIN
(Turkiye) Speaking during the inauguration of a 30-student kindergarten in Mardin, State of Emergency (OHAL) Regional Governor's Office said the village guard system would not be eliminated in the OHAL region in case of liquidation.

¶14. HANDBILLS DISTRIBUTED IN HAKKARI AFTER 22 YEARS
(Evrensel) For the first time since 1980, the Hakkari Human Rights Association (HRA) has distributed handbills and displayed posters in the province, where the State of Emergency (OHAL) was lifted in July.

¶15. KIRM MEMBERS INDICTED
(Evrensel) The Diyarbakir Prosecutor's Office concluded its indictment of thirty people who had been arrested in Diyarbakir on charges of being members of the Kurdistan Islamic Revolutionary Movement (KIDH). According to article 7 of the Anti-terror law, the prosecutor requested prison terms of five years for the suspects for "establishing and leading a terror organization."

¶16. HIZBULLAH SUSPECTS ARRESTED
(Turkiye) During a December 12 operation, Diyarbakir Jandarma arrested three Hizbulah suspects whose names were mentioned in Hizbulah documents seized during an anti-Hizbulah operation in Beykoz (Istanbul). According to the seized Hizbulah documents, the arrestees had been carrying out Hizbulah activities in mosques and associations.

¶17. HRA: NO SERIOUS DEMOCRATIZATION STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN
(Evrensel) Human Rights Association (HRA) National President Husnu Ondul attended the December 15 "Human Rights in Turkey" panel discussion in Diyarbakir to mark International Human Rights Week. In his opening remarks, Ondul criticized state officials for throwing the ball to the EU by saying, "We have met the Copenhagen criteria." Claiming no serious steps had been taken in the name democratization, Ondul stressed legal amendments made (recently) were not clear in terms of practice of law. "For example, the word terror can lead to problems in practice. According to Ondul, big human rights abuses were being experienced in the field of torture and freedom of expression despite recent legal reforms.

¶18. ALLEGATIONS OF CONTINUED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES
(Bolge/Evrensel) People's Democracy Party (HADEP) who gathered in Adana's Station Square on December 15 to celebrate International Human

Rights Week staged a sit-down demonstration to protest continued human rights violations. The demonstrators also faxed messages to the President's Office to eliminate these violations.

¶9. CONTINUED PRO-OCALAN DEMONSTRATIONS
(Evrensel) Isolation of PKK/KADEK leader Abdullah Ocalan was protested in Sanliurfa, Konak (Izmir) and Siirt. Protestors called for the elimination of the isolation by burning tires, turning on and off their lights and shouting pro-Ocalan slogans. In Siirt, two protestors were arrested and taken to the Security Directorate for interrogation.

¶10. MERSIN NGO OFFICIALS INDICTED FOR CRITICIZING OHAL
(Evrensel) The Adana State Security Court Prosecutor's Office indicted Mersin Migration and Humanitarian Assistance Foundation (GIYAV) officials and members for "assisting and abetting the PKK" for having criticized the State of Emergency (OHAL) by saying "OHAL conditions are not consistent with democracy and freedom." Foundations members face possible prison terms of four to seven years.

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

¶11. STUDENT DORMITORY INAUGURATED
(Turkiye) Adiyaman Governor Halil Isik, Gaziantep Mayor Celal Dogan, Gaziantep University Rector Huseyin Filiz and Higher Education Credits and Dormitories Director General Halim Kucuk inaugurated a dormitory constructed in Besni (Adiyaman) by local businessman Mehmet Erdemoglu. The 500-student dormitory cost TL 1 trillion (approx. USD 650,000) to construct.
HOLTZ